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CALVERT OF CANNIBAL FIJI

By CONSTANCE M. HALL.

THAKOMBAU.

Wesleyan
Methodist
Missionary
Society

24 Bishopsgate, E.C. 2.

¶ The work in Fiji and Tonga is now under the care of the Methodist Church of Australasia, which is itself the result of our missionary work and nobly carries on the missionary tradition. It has also missions in New Guinea, Samoa, and many other lands under the Southern Cross, and has recently established a mission in North India.

¶ In Fiji a new problem faces the Church, the coming in of large numbers of indentured coolies from India.

¶ Whilst the missionaries of to-day are rarely called to face such dangers as are told of here, they have other and equally great difficulties which call for the same courage and spirit that animated Calvert.

¶ For further reading, Vernon's "James Calvert: or from Dark to Dawn in Fiji," may be borrowed from the Mission House Lending Library. Postage 4½d.

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BY

CONSTANCE M. HALL.

LONDON:
WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
24 BISHOPSGATE E.C. 2.
1918

STOPPING A CANNIBAL FEAST.—(*page 15.*)

Calvert of Cannibal Fiji.

CHAPTER I.

The Call of Fiji.

"What is the matter, James?" The printer came into his little stationer's shop where his young apprentice stood reading a letter from home with a face full of trouble. "Mother's ill, sir. Can I go home and see her to-night?" "You can go, but how about work to-morrow morning?" "I'll be back at seven, sir."

Glad indeed were his sisters when their fourteen year old brother got home that night. Before he went to Malton to learn the printing trade he had been most useful to his father on the little farm in Yorkshire. Many were the cold nights on which he was out fetching up the sheep or tending the cattle, and the sturdy lad had grown up ready to face hardship with pluck and endurance.

Now in their great trouble they were all very glad to have him at home. Night after night he walked the five miles out to Thorpe Bassett after his work at Malton was done so that he might be with his mother as long as she needed him.

The days passed by slowly, and in spite of all the love and care lavished upon her by her husband and children she grew steadily weaker. James knew that the sight of her face and the glad smile which greeted him at the end of his walk would soon be hidden, and the voice he loved would be still for ever.

One night he came home and found her worse than usual. A great fear troubled him. Was she going to the Homeland? Was there a welcome for her in the Father's House? Did she know Him as her Best Friend? Down by her bedside

he knelt. The great hot tears welled up and fell upon the coverlet as he prayed with all the longing of his big loving heart that God would take her into His own tender care. That was the last night on which James came home to see her, before morning dawned the mother's place in the little farmstead was empty.

He went back to the shop in Malton where he made steady progress with his work. He took a keen interest in it and fully intended to make his way in the trade ; but something happened which altered all his cherished plans and upset his dreams of becoming an influential master printer and stationer. Three years after the day on which he knelt at his mother's bedside he realised that the Friend whom he had sought so earnestly for her, he himself needed above all things. On April 8th, 1831, he made the Great Resolve. All that he had was laid at the feet of Christ who had accepted and forgiven him. It made all the difference to his life ; as long as he lived he kept the memory of that day. He often said, "It was *the* event of my most eventful life." Such an event was not to pass by unremarked. It was a thing worth telling and James seized every opportunity of preaching the Good News of the Gospel of Love.

At that time he was in Colchester pursuing his trade with great success, but God had another plan for him. He was recommended as a candidate for the Wesleyan ministry, and willingly accepted this larger opportunity. He had read much about missionary work in the South Sea Islands, especially of Peter Turner's work in Samoa ; Turner was greatly in need of a missionary printer. Printing Calvert thoroughly understood, but he felt that to become a missionary he must have time for study and training. He entered Hoxton College, London, as a missionary student, intending to spend three years there and then volunteer to help Turner in Samoa.

Not many months later a cry rang out over the Southern Seas from the missionaries in far away Fiji. It told of the nameless horrors and degradation of the poor ignorant cannibals who peopled these islands. It told of the wonderful oppor-

tunities of raising them from the depths and opening their eyes to a new life of joy and peace and love. Something had already been done. The good news had come from the neighbouring group known as Tonga or the Friendly Isles. Two missionaries from there, unable to resist the call, had gone with some native helpers and settled among the Fijians. The opportunities were boundless, the fields were white, but where were the labourers?

Methodism could not remain unmoved at the sound of an appeal such as this. Money flowed in freely to the coffers of this Mission House. In the college at Hoxton it was known that two men were to be sent out at once. Who would go? Calvert's friend John Hunt was one of the two who volunteered. Then a gift from a wealthy Methodist lady made it possible to send out a third man, and one morning Calvert was sent for by the Governors of the College. "Will you go to Fiji?" they said. He thought of his plans and his scanty education; the three years of study which he needed so sorely were only just beginning: then there came to him a vision of the great need of those far away islands. Plans, preparations, everything must go. God was calling to him through the voice of those lonely missionaries. "I'm willing to go to Fiji" he said. It was said to be the worst place in the world. To James Calvert that appeal was irresistible and he replied, "Then that is the place for me."

CHAPTER II.

Bringing Home his Bride.

A great friend of Calvert's said that "after giving himself to God he never did a better thing for himself or for the sacred cause to which he was committed than when he gained Mary Fowler as his wife." The decision had to be quickly made, for these were the instructions James Calvert received when he agreed to go to Fiji, "You must be ready to sail within a month and you must take your wife with you." They were married in London in March, 1838, and soon after set sail. It was a strange honeymoon and a long one, for sailing in those days was very slow. They were thrown in close contact with

their fellow passengers on the eight months voyage and the intimacy between Hunt and Calvert, already begun in College, deepened and ripened into a close friendship which was lifelong.

The long voyage came to an end ; the little vessel which brought them on the last stage of their journey sighted the line of surf which marks the presence of the coral reef encircling Lakemba, the easternmost of the larger islands of the group, and the site of the first Mission station in Fiji. James and Mary Calvert standing on board, watching for the first glimpse of their future home, could hear the boom of the breakers as they dashed in ceaseless fury against the barrier reef which hurled them back again in a boiling seething mass of foam and spray. They wondered how they could possibly pass the reef and gain the safe anchorage within. Then as the little vessel ploughed her way onward they could see a roadway like a broad ribbon of blue which marked the entrance to the harbour. It was but a narrow passage, and as Calvert looked at the great waves thundering on either side he held his breath. If the frail vessel were caught in those waves nothing could save her, she would be at once broken to matchwood on the cruel jagged spikes of coral. In years to come he was to know much of this kind of navigation ; to-day he was in the hands of a skilful captain who brought them safely through the reef. In a few minutes the *Letitia* rode at anchor in the peaceful blue waters of the harbour.

A shout rang out from the shore as the brown islanders ran down to the water's edge. "A ship, a ship," they cried, as they launched their canoes and made their way swiftly to the side of the vessel. Mr. and Mrs. Calvert with the other missionaries stepped into the canoes leaving their baggage on board and were paddled quickly to the shore. There was no one to greet them but the islanders with their strange tongue. Then as they made their way to the Mission House a white man came running down. It was Mr. Cargill, one of the two first missionaries to Fiji. Disturbed by the news of the arrival in his occupation of shaving he came, shaving brush

in hand, to give them a glad welcome. Very thankful were all the missionaries to avail themselves of his experience and ready help in the months to come, when they set themselves to the first great problem which confronts a missionary—the task of becoming familiar with the language of the people.

Mr. Calvert began at once to search for a site upon which to build his house. He found plenty of ready helpers, and, as housebuilding is not a lengthy business in Fiji, within a fortnight his house was completed. It was built in native fashion with a wooden framework, reed walls and a roof thatched with the leaves of the sugar cane. Here he brought Mary to her first home. It might be a strange home-coming, and it was truly very different from the quiet life which she had lived in the far away Buckinghamshire village, but it was always "home" where Mary was, however unusual the surroundings. She had many visitors; the natives would come in and out looking with wonder upon her strange possessions, especially the portrait of her husband's father which accompanied them in all their wanderings and found an honoured place upon the walls. The Fijians gave to it the peculiar salute reserved for a chief as they passed by. Mary soon found opportunities of helping them in their difficulties and they learnt to love the "Lady of the wooden house," who was never too busy to do them a kindness.

CHAPTER III.

Twelve Thousand Miles from a Doctor.

Keeping house when food is strange and when the only method of payment is a system of simple exchange is a problem, especially when negotiations have to be carried on in an unknown language. Mary found it difficult at first. There were tropical fruits in abundance on Lakemba, plenty of yams and taro, a kind of sweet potato very much appreciated by the natives. Fish was also to be had, the chief fishers being the women. Often they could be seen down on the coral reef, their babies placed up to the neck in a round hole dug in the sand, where they could keep an eye upon them as

they went about their work. The greatest difficulty was with meat. Cattle and sheep were unknown, at one time the largest animal on the island was a field mouse. There was pig, pig always without any change, but pork day after day becomes wearisome—even when they served it with caper sauce it was still pig!

Sometimes their supply of flour and their stores gave out and they were obliged to depend on native food. Mr. Calvert's health suffered at times through scarcity of good food. It was then that he was thankful for having taken the opportunity while in London of attending classes at one of the hospitals where he gained a working knowledge of medicine, for at that time the nearest doctor was at Sydney, 12,000 miles away! Very soon the natives began to trust him and to come to him with their ailments. Long before he could speak their language they knew that *Kaliveti loved them because he was always ready to heal their sicknesses.

One day there came a messenger to the door—"The Princess Tangithi is ill, the King Tui Nayau has sent for you to make her better." Kaliveti went at once. He found the native priests already before him. Large presents of taro pudding had been given to the gods, Tui Nayau gave orders that the temples were to be restored and worship offered. The priests came, muttered their incantations, did their offices, but Tangithi lay in a dull heavy stupor. Kaliveti administered medicine. Soon she stirred and seemed uneasy, then she grew restless and feverish. The King was in a frenzy of anxiety, he thought she was dying. "You have killed my daughter," he cried angrily. Kaliveti, not daring to show fear, snatched up his bottles indignantly and went. All night long he sat in his own house, behind closed and locked doors, fearing every minute to hear that the Princess was dead. In the morning a messenger came. "Will you send medicine for another child of the King who is sick?" "Certainly not" said Kaliveti, "having killed one daughter of the King last night, it is not lawful for a missionary to kill two children in so short a time." The messenger departed but returned

* Native Name for Calvert.

shortly with an apology from Tui Nayau, and after persuasion Kaliveti sent the medicine.

For another fortnight Tangithi lay under the charge of the native doctors, but there was no sign of improvement; then at her own request Kaliveti was sent for. He stipulated that the native doctors should be discharged. Her recovery should be entirely attributed to the Great God. In order to have her under his constant supervision, she was removed to his own house, where Mrs. Calvert nursed her. Her presence under his roof involved the entertainment of a whole retinue of curious attendants, but Mrs. Calvert did not shrink from the ordeal. Gradually their care was rewarded; Tangithi grew better, and at her own desire she began to learn about the Great God to whom she owed her recovery. When she went back to her home it was as an avowed worshipper of Jehovah. The seed sown had taken root and bore fruit in the high places of Lakemba: Mr. and Mrs. Calvert felt that there was already promise of an abundant harvest.

CHAPTER IV.

The Messenger of the Lotu.

A large double canoe was paddling gently along keeping close in shore where the water was still and calm. Looking down into its clear blue depths one could see wonderful, many-hued fish, shewing brilliant sparkles of colour as they darted in and out of the branching seaweed. Here and there over the sunlit water were canoes, the brown crews paddling and chanting native songs, their voices keeping time with the stroke of the paddles. Farther out, where the little vessels caught the freshening breeze, some had hoisted their yellow mat sails. One could see standing on the forepart of these a native baling out the water with the sole of his foot as the water came over the prow of the little craft.

On board the large canoe was Kaliveti bound for Waitambu, where he was going to tell the Good News of the Lotu—as the Christian worship was called in Fiji. He was constantly journeying to and fro in this way among the

numerous islands lying within hail of Lakemba. Suddenly there was a shout and a splash. Kaliveti taking a hand with the paddle, overbalanced and fell into the water. It was not deep enough to be dangerous, but he was thoroughly wet and uncomfortable : so he made his way in shore and walked along the beach in the hot sun to dry himself. Then as the canoe was obliged to sail farther from shore, he waded out to rejoin her. As he drew near he saw with a shudder the large black form of a shark. He needed no urging to hasten to the safe refuge of his canoe ! Many such adventures befell the messenger of the Lotu as he went on his frequent journeyings to and fro. His days were strenuous, for now the whole responsibility of the work in Lakemba rested upon him. So insistent were the calls from the other islands in the group that the other missionaries had scattered to stations further west leaving Mr. and Mrs. Calvert alone on Lakemba.

One day a messenger came to him from the far distant isle of Ono, 150 miles further south. Already he had sent there a supply of books and a teacher, but they wanted a white missionary to visit them. "We have learned about the Lotu," they said, "and now we want to be baptised." Kaliveti hesitated and almost refused : he thought of his wife and little child. If he went they would be alone. How could he leave them at the mercy of these natives, whom as yet he could not trust ? He thought of the hole in the wall of his house which he had found one morning, the missing clothing and a heap of ugly looking stones beside the wall, at hand in case the thief had been disturbed. He had also reason to believe that Tui Nayau was only a fair weather friend—surely it was not right to go. Mrs. Calvert was there when the message came ; she knew well what kept her husband back. "Do you intend to go ?" she said. "How can I" he replied. "Why not ?" "How can I leave you alone !" "It would be better to leave me alone than to neglect so many people," she replied bravely. "If you can arrange for the work to be carried on here you ought to go."

At the bidding of his wife Mr. Calvert went. He found two hundred and thirty-three people waiting for baptism.

Among them was the Princess Tovo. Her request for baptism involved great issues. Ono was tributary to the King of Lakemba, and the Princess was already betrothed to Tui Nayau to become one of his thirty wives. "You must choose," said Kaliveti, "between baptism and the King." It was a serious matter, one that involved not only her personal safety but the welfare of the whole island, for Tui Nayau was almost certain to exact vengeance for this refusal to obey his bidding. Nobly the Oneans resolved to stand by their Princess, let the consequences be what they might ; so she was baptised.

When he returned to Lakemba Kaliveti sought an interview with Tui Nayau, urging him to leave the Princess alone. "Remember," he said, "that on the sea and on all the islands between Lakemba and Ono the Lord Jehovah reigns supreme, and can easily punish you if you are found fighting against Him." Unheeding Kaliveti's warning Tui Nayau set sail with a great fleet of canoes—as he said, to collect tribute from Ono. The days passed by. Kaliveti wondered what was happening and prayed much for the safety of the Oneans. At last the King returned ; very soon he came to see Kaliveti, and poured forth the story of his terrible experience and escape from almost certain death. When nearing Ono, he said, they were caught in the grip of a sudden squall which seized their canoes and swept them before it like straws before the wind. To land on Ono was impossible, there seemed to be no escape from drowning. He oiled himself and prepared for death, cried and prayed to His gods, but they did not hear. He even promised them a large pig if they would protect him, but they had no power. At length creeping from island to island like an ashamed schoolboy he reached Lakemba again. "Here is the pig, it is for you. Never let your words of warning follow me again. I can do with the little gods of Fiji, but that Great God of yours, I fear Him, He can send the wind after you and you cannot escape Him."

On the opposite side of Lakemba from the King's Town lay the most populous town in the island, known as Yandrana Port. For many years there had been constant strife and jealousy between the men of the two towns which often

resulted in bloodshed. Yandrana men were also strongly opposed to Christianity, and all Kaliveti's efforts to win them over seemed to be of no avail. About ten o'clock one night he heard a knock at his door and greatly to his surprise found a messenger from Yandrana waiting there. "Will you come at once, for Yandrana wants to become *lotu*," the messenger said. "The men of the King's Town have killed and wounded some of our men and by our law we must fight to avenge the fallen. We are tired of war and want to live in peace and we have learned that your *lotu* law forbids men to fight in revenge. That is why we want to *lotu*." Late though it was Kaliveti knew that he must act at once; he dressed quickly and set out upon his way. All through the night he tramped the long ten mile journey across the island, entering the town of Yandrana next morning just after sunrise. In their heathen temple, hung with trophies of war and bloodshed, and stained by many a human sacrifice, Kaliveti met the warrior chiefs and some of their followers, men who could boast of having slain their tens or may be their scores of foes. He lifted up his voice in prayer, and they bowed their heads and worshipped—Jehovah, King of Love. Scarcely was the service over when a messenger from the King arrived in hot haste and met Kaliveti coming out from the temple. "The King has sent to forbid the worship," he said. "It is too late," said Kaliveti, "the deed is already sealed, Jehovah is King here, for Yandrana men have *lotued*." "Ah," said the King when they met later on, "what a thing it is! I sent to enquire about their becoming Christian in order to prevent it, but I was too late. Religion is not like a dress to be put on and off, but it is a work of the heart. It spreads and we shall all become Christian," and Tui Nayau was right.

Twelve years afterwards Mr. Calvert stood before a congregation of these very men to appeal for help. "I want," he said, "men who are not afraid to risk life for the sake of their countrymen in the darker parts of Fiji. It may be that you will have to suffer hardship and hunger; you may be driven from your homes and have to flee for your very lives. If there

be men here who are ready to suffer these things let them follow me to the Teacher's house." Nearly twenty men responded to that appeal.

CHAPTER V.

The King of the Cannibal Islands.

He was a magnificent looking man, more than ordinarily tall and strong, with a clear black skin, great masses of thick hair crowning a noble head, and fine searching eyes. Though not at this time king on his own island of Mbau, yet his personality dominated the entire Fijian group, and Thakombau has rightly been styled "King of the Cannibal Islands." When Kaliveti first met him, on a visit to the King of Lakemba, he was greatly impressed with the man. "Here, thought he, is the key to the whole situation. To win this man for Christ is to win all Fiji. I must pray for him." From that time Thakombau had a very special place in Calvert's prayers: then at last the track of his life led him into very close contact with the Chief.

John Hunt lay dying at his lonely station on the Isle of Viwa. Kaliveti hastened across to see him, and in the arms of his beloved friend the devoted young missionary entered into rest, breathing the prayer, "Lord save Fiji, bless Fiji." Calvert could no longer work on Lakemba, he was the only one who could take Hunt's place, for the printing press was now on Viwa and no one else knew how to work it. This western station also was of too great importance to be left unmanned. Close by lay the island of Mbau where Thakombau held sway, and beyond it again, Viti Levu, the second largest island in the group; so it came about that the opportunity of influencing Thakombau for which Kaliveti longed was granted to him.

The chief was not altogether unfriendly to the missionaries; he had a great love for Hunt and also for Kaliveti, but he was not willing to accept their religion. When his old father, King Tanoa died, he would be King of Mbau, but his ambition went further than that. He would rule over the

whole group, other chiefs should submit to his proud will. There was but one way. By the club his ancestors held sway, by the club he would rule—that great massive club which had already stricken terror into the heart of many a foe. When his ambition was realised, perhaps then he would *lotu*. "Wait," he would say to Kaliveti, "till I have conquered, then we will all *lotu*." Well might they call him "King of the Cannibal Islands;" all the features of cannibalism were present at his court and all the appeals of Kaliveti were as the waves beating ceaselessly against a solid rock. Yet even the stoniest heart is not proof against the onrush of the mighty ocean of love.

It happened one day that a neighbouring tribe came to visit the King of Mbau: to Ngavindi, Chief among the Fishermen, was entrusted the responsible task of their entertainment. Night after night there was feasting and dancing; the women were kept busy preparing quantities of taro puddings, fish and other native dainties, that their reception should lack nothing in munificence. Yet Ngavindi's brow was clouded; there had as yet been no cannibal feast and the visitors would soon be returning, preparations must be set forward at once—the missionaries would be angry certainly, but the laws of hospitality must not be infringed on their account. Then the opportunity came, Kaliveti and his colleague Mr. Lyth went to visit a distant station; Ngavindi rejoiced, here was a chance which must not be missed. Down on the reef a party of fifteen women were busy catching the bright rainbow coloured fish for the entertainment of the visitors. All at once there was a cry of alarm, the women looked round hastily but it was too late, there was no escape for them. Ngavindi's men had surrounded them; already the death drum was sounding and the death song could be heard as they were dragged ruthlessly to the beach and up to the temple where the cannibal ovens were being prepared. Then was Ngavindi happy; he had escaped the vigilance of the missionary—but, he had forgotten the missionary's wife.

Over there on the island of Viwa Mrs. Calvert and Mrs. Lyth caught the sound of the death drum; they had heard it

too often to be mistaken as to its meaning. What could they do? Even now there might be time to save life. Tanoa, the old king, could spare these women if he would. It was not lawful for a woman to go unbidden into the king's tent; nevertheless they did not hesitate. They procured a canoe and were quickly poled over to Mbau, and without giving a thought to their own safety they rushed headlong into the presence of the king. With burning words they pleaded for the lives of their sisters now in such awful peril and the God who protected the Hebrew queen long years ago as she pleaded for her countrymen before the Persian king, was with these women now. Tanoa, amazed at their courage, could not resist their passionate appeal, and he gave them the lives of all upon whom the death stroke had not yet fallen. Five of the women were saved.

Not more than a year afterwards Ngavindi, the murderer, himself fell in a brawl with a neighbouring tribe. To give honourable burial it was necessary that some of his women should accompany him on his journey to the spirit world. Among the victims was his old mother; and to Thakambau, the nearest of kin, fell the duty of strangling her. Kaliveti heard of the deed too late to prevent the murder; he found the chief peacefully sleeping when he arrived. When he awakened he said regretfully in answer to Kaliveti's reproof, "Ay, how you missionaries labour to save life, and we are always trying to kill one another. What a pity you were too late! Had you been in time I would have spared Ngavindi's mother." The mighty ocean of love flinging itself untiringly upon the granite rock was already making an impression: slowly, almost imperceptibly, the resistance was being worn away.

CHAPTER VI.

Club Law or Love Law.

Thakombau was furious. He had just heard that his own cousin Na Yangondamu had embraced the *lotu*. How could he maintain his authority by means of the club when over here, in his own household, men were acknowledging the law of love? This thing must be checked at once or his cherished

plans would crumble to the dust and he would be just plain Thakombau, king of Mbau, nothing more, having no more authority than any other chief. Angrily he greeted Kaliveti when they met. "Why do you not wait?" he said, "you go about here and there and everywhere and talk, talk at a great rate; and now actually one of our own family has become *lotu*—but he will not be followed." Then, his love getting the better of his anger, he said, as he looked into the face of his friend, "Great is our mutual love, so your body must be allowed to go about and your tongue to move."

So the conflict went on; sometimes Kaliveti was full of hope, sometimes he was downcast and almost despairing, but he never relaxed his efforts. Day after day, whenever the opportunity came, reproving, suggesting, pleading, he sought to break down the barriers and win his way to the proud chief's heart. Sometimes it seemed proof against all advances; widow strangling and cannibal feasts were still a matter of common occurence. When the old king Tanoa died, Kaliveti sought by all the means in his power to spare his women folk: he even offered his own little finger as a sacrifice, but it was of no avail. The women must die, no king could enter upon the long, lone journey into the spirit world unattended.

Now at last Thakombau was king in his own right, but his power instead of increasing was surely diminishing. His proud and overbearing spirit had made him many enemies and one by one those who owed allegiance to him were going over to his sworn foe Ratu Nggara, king of the neighbouring island of Rewa. A great battle was impending and every day brought fresh adherents to the Rewan standard. Thakombau must be crushed, they thought, or we shall be under his heel for ever. To and fro among the combatants Kaliveti went, caring nothing for his own safety but using all his influence to persuade Nggara to desist from the struggle. All his efforts were in vain; Nggara would shake his head, not until he had killed and eaten Thakombau would he lay down the club and dwell at peace.

One day Kaliveti went in his canoe to visit some of the disturbed villages on his mission of peace. Returning home again he determined to put in at the village of Moturiki on the coast of the main island, Viti Levu, for he knew that an attack was planned upon the place by Nggara's people and he wanted to warn them. As they paddled in shore he could see a man standing on the beach beckoning to them. He seemed to be friendly so Kaliveti sent one of his men to him with a message. The man climbed out of the boat and waded shorewards, but was soon back again, crying "There are men among the cocoanut trees, they will kill me."

Still the man on shore kept calling. Kaliveti got into the water in his wading shoes and ordered the crew to paddle round and put in for him at another point. As he waded towards the beach men came running from both directions. To get back to the boat now was impossible, he determined to go on. Soon he was surrounded by a crowd of a hundred strong, some of the men with uplifted clubs ready to strike, one with levelled musket. "I trembled," said Kaliveti afterwards, "but showed no fear. I thought of my home and family, and committed my wife and children to the Lord, and gave my life afresh to Him. My life was in His hands.

'They cannot, Lord, my life devour,
Safe in the hollow of Thy hand.'"

Then a man ran up who had once met the "Lady of the wooden house." He recognised Mr. Calvert as her husband and for her sake he determined to protect him. Under his persuasion the natives began to settle down more peaceably till a very angry looking man came up. He was determined to have Kaliveti's life. Twice he brought his musket to bear on Kaliveti, but they seized his arms and held him back. Now they wanted Kaliveti to go back to his canoe, intending, if they could not kill him, to murder his crew, but he divined their intention and persisted in wading shorewards. How tired he was! His clothes were saturated with water and his voice hoarse with shouting at them. They pulled at his clothes and began to sing their horrible death song. At last, exhausted and almost unable to walk, he reached the beach,

when his unwelcome bodyguard left him and departed on their own errands. Very thankfully he recognised a friendly chief from Mbau coming down to meet him. The chief was grieved when he heard of Kaliveti's terrible experience and sent him at once in a canoe back to Viwa where Mrs. Calvert was anxiously waiting for news, having just consented to allow a rescue party to go in search of him.

Day after day brought news of more desertions to the enemy forces. In Thakombau's hour of need Kaliveti stood by him, for he felt certain that the king was the only man in Fiji strong enough to weld the whole group into one solid kingdom ; and the king marvelled at his loyalty. "When the vessel is sinking," he said, "everyone is anxious to provide for his own safety : but you whom I reviled remain to perish with me." Was the club the only power by which to rule ? Thakombau was not so sure about it now : he was beginning to see possibilities in the still mightier power of love.

CHAPTER VII.

Victories of Love.

A vessel flying a flag at half mast was slowly making her way into the harbour at Viwa. Out from the shore darted a small canoe with one man on board. His face was full of eager expectancy as he reached the side of the vessel and clambered up on deck, but he was startled when he looked into the faces of those on board, for they met his anxious enquiry with pitying looks. Little Mary, Calvert's eldest child, sent to England months ago for her education, was dead.

Her father and mother had been watching anxiously for the return of the *John Wesley* bringing news of her safe arrival, but now it brought them the sad news that their child had set out on her last journey. Sadly Calvert dropped over the side of the ship and paddled slowly homewards. How could he tell his other Mary ? She was on the beach waiting for him, her eyes had noted the drooping flag, and she read in his face the terrible truth. Their hearts were sad and sore, but the work must not suffer on that account. Mr. Calvert had

planned an expedition to visit some of the distant stations on the main island and within a week he was on his way. Very bravely they set aside their own sorrow that they might lighten the shadows of ignorance and evil which lay so darkly across these lovely islands of the Pacific. Nor were their efforts in vain, for very gradually a shaft of light was finding its way into the dark heart of the king.

In 1854 Thakombau was taken ill ; he was attended by the missionary doctor, Mr. Lyth, under whose skilful care he recovered. During the long days of illness he had much time for thought. How lovingly these missionaries cared for him ! They might have cast him on one side in his weakness and helplessness, but just when he needed them most, they were at his side. There was a letter, too, which made him think. It was from George, the Christian king of the Friendly Isles, urging him to *lotu*. Surely the time was ripe, he would hesitate no longer. Calvert was sent for. Rogo Rogo Valu, the great war drum, sounded forth as it had done many a time in days gone by ; at its call the people gathered together, not for a cannibal feast, nor to set out upon some errand of pillage and plunder, but to worship the missionaries' God.

In the great Strangers' Hall Thakombau took his place with the heathen priest by his side ; while round about him were the members of his household and all the people who had come at the bidding of his drum. James Calvert stood up to address that strange congregation. He was deeply moved and his voice almost broke with emotion. He looked into the faces of those men, remembering what their lives had been and what cruelties they had committed. He looked into the face of the man for whom he had toiled and prayed all through these fifteen long years. For him it was a day of victory. It was a day of victory for all Fiji : this day the fetters which had bound them these long years were breaking and the hour of freedom was at hand.

"Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free ;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity."

This was not the phantom picture of a dream, it was the beginning of a day already at the breaking of the dawn.

Thakombau never went back to his old heathen customs, he had made a great resolve and he acted upon it with all the energy of his strong will. The storms broke over him, enemies almost crushed him, it seemed as though every vestige of power would be wrested away and he would be obliged to flee for his very life. Through it all he remained steadfast to Jehovah, his chosen King.

Ratu Nggara was still his enemy. More bitter than ever, he gathered all his forces together and prepared to deliver a crushing blow upon his foe. The news of Thakombau's conversion reached him. "If he be a hypocrite," he remarked, "his *lotu* will only add fuel to the fire, but if he be truly Christian we shall not get him." Ratu Nggara spoke more truly than he knew: when in the full strength of his might, with victory almost within his grasp, the angel of the Lord went forth, and on January 26th, 1855, Ratu Nggara, King of Rewa, died of dysentery, unconscious to the end, so that he was not even able to charge his descendants with the sacred task of overcoming Thakombau. The king, hearing of his death, sent at once to make overtures of peace to the Rewan chiefs, which they accepted, and the long, long years of strife and bloodshed were ended. Thus the message rang through all Fiji that Jehovah, God of Love, reigns, and can protect those who put their trust in Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

"KALIVETI'S GOD."

"How I wish I had never wasted three years in learning the printer's trade!" thought Calvert, when as a missionary student he entered College, for he knew the three years of his College course would be too short for all he needed to learn. Nor, indeed, were those three brief years allowed him; in a few months he was on his way to Fiji with his colleagues and —a printing press! When they landed on Lakemba the press was at once set up; Mr. Cargill and his fellow missionary having already prepared a translation of St. Mark's Gospel in

Fijian, Calvert was able to print it for them. The three years in the printer's shop were not wasted, they were part of the divine plan for his life.

The natives were wonderfully interested in "Kaliveti's new god." They crowded round him, eager to examine the marvels it produced. Calvert lost no opportunity of picking up from them words and phrases, while Mr. Cargill was always ready to help with the study of the language. He soon became so clever in his use of it that the natives said that when Kaliveti spoke it was like a man speaking his Mother tongue. One of the chief reasons why he was removed from Lakemba to Viwa was that he might carry on the work of printing and translation left unfinished at the death of John Hunt. It was a tremendous task for one man ; there were long journeys to make by canoe to outlying stations, native teachers to visit and supervise, schools to examine, medical work and a host of other things to do, apart from printing and translation. Mr. Calvert felt he must have someone to help him.

Just at that very time a young Frenchman named Edward Martin came to live on Viwa. Some time earlier he had been shipwrecked and cast ashore on one of the islands of the Fijian group, from which he removed to Viwa. As he was out of work Mr. Calvert employed him to stitch and bind books, at which he was so apt a pupil that Mr. Calvert went on to teach him the whole art of printing. In every way he proved to be the very man for the work. There was nothing he could not do, from hanging a door to splicing a rope or flooring a house, while at the same time he won the love of the natives by his teaching and preaching.

Now at last the manuscript of the first Fijian Bible was complete. Loving hands had helped in this great task begun by John Hunt, and made it ready for the press. The British and Foreign Bible Society promised to print it, but it was necessary for one missionary to go to England to help with the revision and correction of proofs. Everyone felt that Calvert was the man to go, for his knowledge of the language

was invaluable in such a work. It has been said of him that more than any man he was the creator of Fijian literature. He had completed seventeen years of service, too, in Fiji, and had well earned his furlough.

The Sunday before he left he preached in the Strangers' Hall to a crowded congregation. Seventeen years before the waters of the harbour would have been covered with canoes and their brown crews shouting and gesticulating one to another. In those days Sunday was just like any other day. To-day all was peaceful and still ; the blue waters of the lagoon were undisturbed by any ripple save that perhaps made in the wake of a canoe carrying a teacher on his labour of love. In those days a strange canoe would have been hailed with shouts which told of coming death and with the tom-tom of the death drum. To-day the teacher was gladly welcomed as the "teller of Good News."

Seventeen years in Fiji ! James Calvert looked back upon them with a feeling almost akin to awe. How wonderfully he had been guided and protected ! Here and there and all along the roadway from the day when he obeyed the Call which led him to Fiji, he could trace the working of a mighty Power controlling the hostile forces opposed to him, until to-day they were prostrate, bowing in submission and adoration to Him whose Name is Love.

CHAPTER IX.

After Many Days.

The little household at Woodbridge, Suffolk, was perplexed. Mr. and Mrs. Calvert had spent five happy years there, experiencing for the first time the joys of family life : now there came to them a request from the Missionary Society. "Six young missionaries are going out to Fiji ; one of our best men on the field has died, and there is no one of experience to guide them in their work out there. Will you go with them ?" To go out again meant leaving the children behind, the family circle must be broken up. Mr. Calvert felt he could not ask his wife to make such a sacrifice. Once

again it was she who bade him go. "We must go back to Fiji," she bravely said.

Everywhere on their arrival in the islands they received a joyous welcome. It was the time for the District Meeting to be held at Mbau and when the *John Wesley* arrived in port with her missionary freight Mr. Calvert presided over the meetings as Chairman of the District. Immediately afterwards followed the first missionary meeting ever held on Mbau. In a large square cleared for the purpose the missionary collection was laid. First came Thakombau in full dress bringing his kingly gift of ten heads of turtle shell which he laid at Mrs. Calvert's feet. Added to this gift were several cans of cocoanut oil. Then came the men each with his can of oil ; and after them the women, singing as they came. The Queen gave three cans of oil. Fishermen, women, youths, carpenters, followed each other in quick succession, each with his gift, until the cans prepared to receive the precious oil were filled to overflowing and a search for more cans was instituted. It was a day of great rejoicing and Mr. and Mrs. Calvert were glad to have their share in the thanksgiving.

For five years James Calvert acted as Chairman of the Fijian District, then he returned to England, but the old fire burned hot within him. It was impossible to settle down to a peaceful old age and the quiet life of a supernumerary minister : up and down the country he went, lecturing and preaching. He was always popular as a missionary speaker. Revising, translating, publishing occupied his busy days, but even this did not satisfy his roving spirit. After his wife's death in 1882 he was filled with a great longing to see his beloved Fiji once again. He was now past his three score years and ten, too old to be sent out by the Missionary Society for work abroad, so he went at his own expense. It was the year after the Jubilee of missionary work in Fiji ; and he wanted to have a share in the rejoicings over the Gospel triumphs won during those fifty years. One of the first to welcome him on his return was a woman whom he had rescued from strangling thirty years before. He spent forty days

among the islands, visiting his old friends and preaching as much as his strength would allow ; then on the last day in September, 1886, he set sail for England.

As he looked back for the last time upon those beautiful islands lying so peacefully in the midst of the blue waters of the Pacific, he could think of days, now long past, when the beauty and the calm was but a mask which hid the tumult of war and bloodshed within. To-day ninety per cent of the Fijian population were worshipping in the Wesleyan Churches. "The first sound," says Miss Gordon Cumming*," which greets your ear at dawn and the last at night, is that of hymn singing and most fervent worship, rising from each dwelling at the hour of family prayer."

How had it all come to pass ? Let the answer come from the lips of Joeli Bulu, the faithful old Tongan minister who has given his life to Fiji. "I saw," he says, "at Lakemba in 1838, those two men land, with pale faces and weak voices. They could not wield the club like we can. Their wives were not strong like our women. But what changes have they wrought in this island ! Instead of widow-strangling and cannibalism we have a Christian chief ruling over a Christian people. Those pale faced men came from England ; and if the great Queen had sent out ships of war to fire upon us if we would not give up widow-strangling and cannibalism, we might have been blown to pieces ; but we never should have given up the old customs for cannon-balls. The 'Sword of the Spirit' which those two men wielded has done what neither cannon-ball nor cold steel could have done. They not only preached the Word of God, but they lived it ; and their daily life of love and self-denial was a gospel which no prejudice could resist, and no argument withstand."

* "At Home in Fiji."

CHRONOLOGY.

1813. Born at Pickering in Yorkshire.
Parents removed a few months later to a farm at the village of Thorpe Basset.
1827. Apprenticed to a printer and stationer in Malton.
April 8, 1831. The day of his conversion.
1831-37. He became a local preacher while pursuing his calling at Colchester.
Afterwards he moved to London, attending lectures at a London hospital in his spare time.
1837. Recommended for the ministry. Entered Hoxton College intending to offer for foreign service.
1838. *March.* Responded to the call from Fiji.
April. Married Mary Fowler, sister of his college friend.
Sailed with his wife for Fiji, together with John Hunt and another missionary.
December. Arrived at Lakemba, the easternmost station of the Fijian group.
1838-48. Stationed at Lakemba.
1839. Visited the Island of Ono. Baptised more than two hundred people there.
1842. Healed Tangithi, daughter of the King of Lakemba. She became Lotu (Christian).
The men of Yandrana Port, an important town on Lakemba, accepted the Lotu.
1843. Escape from a shark on the way to Waitambu.
1848-55. Work on Viwa Station.
1848. Death of his friend John Hunt.
Subsequent removal to Viwa to take up Hunt's work.
In charge of the printing press.
1848. Beginning of his influence over Thakombau, the greatest personality in Fiji.
1849. Mrs. Calvert and Mrs. Lyth rescue five women from strangulation at a cannibal feast.
1850. Death of his eldest daughter Mary.
1853. Published 3,000 copies of Fijian New Testament.
1854. Illness and Conversion of King Thakombau.
Decline of the King's power. His enemy the King of Rewa threatened to kill and eat him.
Narrow escape of Calvert from murder by the islanders of Moturiki.
1855. Sudden death of the King of Rewa. Peace proclaimed in Fiji.
1855-60. Mr. and Mrs. Calvert's first furlough.
Preparing the Old Testament for the press, and revision of the New Testament at the request of the British and Foreign Bible Society.
1860-65. Return to Fiji as Chairman of the District.
Presided over the 1st Missionary Meeting at Thakombau's island of Mbau.
1866. Return to England.
1882. Death of his wife.
1886. Farewell visit to Fiji at the age of seventy-three.
1892. March 8th. Died at Hastings.
Calvert Memorial Chapel erected there in his memory.

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